

Chapter 6 - Section 2

Cass Presbyterian Church  
Cass, in Rockcastle County, has for a number of years been the center of an extensive lumber industry, and a considerable amount of lumber is still produced in this area. The citizenship of Cass is unusually cosmopolitan in character.

The first Presbyterian services in Cass were conducted by Rev. Henry W. McLaughlin, then pastor of the Liberty and Water Churches, in 1900. He organized a Sunday school in the school house at this time and the preaching services were also conducted here.

It was in 1903 that Wm B. Watkins, a student at the Union Theological Seminary at Richmond, Virginia, was sent to Cass by the Home Mission Committee to preach during the summer vacation. He saw the need of a church there and after his graduation proceeded to carry out his idea by hard and systematic work. With the aid of J. S. Mathews, the late Samuel B. Mannish and other prominent men in the creek district, enough money was raised through loans and subscription to start the church building which, when completed in 1904, was dedicated by Rev. Henry W. McLaughlin. To Wm B. Watkins should go the credit of making this church possible. He did everything from raising the money to employing men to do the constructing which he superintended

and aided.

"Professor Wm J. Watkins of Hampden Sidney College and formerly a pastor of this church, died suddenly on December 17, 1932."

As time passes and many new churches come into this fold and worship God in a comfortable and beautiful church building, and its affairs are organized and governed by capable christian men and women, it should be remembered that it was Wm Watkins, a ministerial student, who came to Cass at vacation time, and conducted services in whatever building was procurable and ministered to the needs of its people. It was he who saw the need of a church in this town when practically no one else did, and working alone, raised money through direct subscription and loans, whereby the nucleus of the present building was erected and furnished. He hired the men to do the work and did a good bit of it himself. It was he who induced the members of the Presbyterian Church who had moved to Cass, to procure their letters in order that a congregation might be organized. It was he who moderated the first congregational meeting at which time the organization was made complete. In fact, it was through the persistent and untiring efforts of Wm J. Watkins that the movement was started that culminated in the present organization, and that has brought many souls to Christ.

The deed for the lots to this church was made on Aug. 1, 1861, from the West Virginia Paper and Paper Co. to A. B. ... J. W. Mathews and U. S. Hannah, Tre. for the Class Presbyterian Church, subject to the following reservations and restrictions: that the lots are to be used for the purpose of maintaining thereon a house for divine worship or other buildings for strictly religious purposes. Should the parties of the second part or their successors in office ever abandon use of said premises for such purposes or with- ... from this date attempt to dispose of said premises to others to be used for other than religious purposes, the title of the said premises shall revert to the party of the first part.

The Class Presbyterian Church was organized with a membership of twelve persons. On the following year, 1865, there were nineteen members reported to the General Assembly. ... of the charter members that I have been able to get ...

- |                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. ... Randolph           | Mrs. W. F. Anderson |
| Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Mathews | " S. B. Matheson    |
| Mr. and Mrs. J. L. ...     | " S. L. Clark       |
| Mr. ...                    |                     |
| Mr. and Mrs. ...           |                     |
| ...                        |                     |
- ... were elected, ... installed elders and Dr. ...

Justin T. Conrad and James W. Kirkpatrick, Deacons.

After Mr. Watkins resigned the pulpit was filled from time to time with several ministers, all of whom preached at Liberty Church at Greenbank and Baxter Church at Lannore.

After a request was sent to Greenbrier Presbytery to segregate the Cass Church from the Liberty and Baxter Churches, the promise being made that it would support a full time minister. The request was granted and Rev. Wm. W. Gray was suggested. He was immediately called. His services were valuable indeed. He brought a large number of new members into the church and was one of its greatest pastors and preachers. During his pastorate the church building was remodeled and enlarged.

The corner stone of this building was laid by the Masonic Grand Lodge of West Virginia. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Dr. Walter W. Bain. Geo. Watkins preached the evening sermon. For many years the Cass Church has been out of debt.

All denominations used the Cass Presbyterian Church for a number of years.

The building occupied by the Cass congregation was erected in 1804, and remodeled in 1819. It was partially destroyed by fire in March, 1827, and was replaced and remodeled later that same year. Many of most of the church members were destroyed at the time of the fire.

The roll of the members of the ... .. Church  
is as follows:

|        |               |
|--------|---------------|
| ... .. | 1895-1897     |
| ... .. | 1897-1910     |
| ... .. | 1910-1912     |
| ... .. | 1912-1918     |
| ... .. | 1918-1928     |
| ... .. | 1928- present |

... .. church has an active membership of one  
hundred forty-four persons. It has for many years sent a  
steady stream of young people into city churches in this  
adjoining state.

This church has enjoyed an aggressive leadership and  
is active in all of its various departments, being noted for  
the young people it has developed in the church's  
service. The work of its church's auxiliary has been es-  
pecially efficient.

... .. church has in the past intrin-  
sicated work in certain nearby lumbering settlements, notably  
Spruce and Aywood, but these have been discontinued  
and other operations in these settlements have closed and  
the people have moved away.

... .. of active ... .. church's service  
... .. the ... ..  
... .. F, ... ..  
... .. of ... ..

Rev. Louis Ayle, now serving in Chicago, Ill.  
 Union conferences are held alternately with the  
 churches at home. No other denominations hold services  
 at any present time in the Presbyterian Church.  
 The present pastor, Rev. James A. Pharr, was born in  
 Charlotte, North Carolina. He attended Charlotte school for  
 boys, Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary at Rich-  
 mond, Virginia. Rev. Pharr has served the Jess Presbyterian  
 Church and the Alexander Memorial Church at Stony Station for  
 the past eleven years.

During the past year nine new members were added to  
 the Jess Church.

A Family Vacation Bible School was conducted in our  
 church under the direction of Rev. Stanton from the Seminary  
 at Richmond. The school opened July 23, 1940 and continued  
 through July 28th. Rev. J. T. Pharr and the following  
 young people assisted with this school: Evelyn Fox, Beatrice  
 Blackhurst, Ernestine Merrick, William Viering, and Tim Pharr.

Each year this church sends a group of young people to  
 camp and conference.

The present leaders are:

- F. C. Mickell
- L. Shafer
- W. H. Smith
- Ray Fox
- W. J. Blackhurst

J. A. Sawyer

W. D. Luff

L. Duncan

WASCO 3:

J. A. Kirkpatrick

W. G. Moss

C. L. Stover

A. J. Hickman

Guy Bellman

Luther B. Jones

The Sunday School enrollment at the present time is one hundred thirty-three.

The Young Peoples League organized an outpost Sunday School at Deer Creek with an enrollment of twenty. Harold Mickell served as the Supt. of this Sunday School until recently when he went to work in another town and Mr. A. J. Smith, Jr., is now Supt. This Sunday School is now self-supporting.

I have been unable to find any record of the first women's societies in the Cass Church. The women of the church are now organized according to the Auxiliary plan of worship. The following is a list of the presidents of the Auxiliary to date:

Mrs. J. B. Hannah

Mrs. A. C. Clark

Mrs. M. M. Mandy

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Mrs. J. H. Moyer   |                    |
| Mrs. J. A. Hansen  |                    |
| Mrs. J. P. Shaffer | 1929 to March 1930 |
| Mrs. M. L. Duncan  | 1930-1932          |
| Mrs. J. W. Hannah  | 1932-1934          |
| Mrs. R. A. Fox     | 1934-1936          |
| Mrs. W. L. Halston | 1936-1938          |
| Mrs. W. T. Miller  | 1938-1940          |

The average enrollment for the ten years is fifty-four members. The largest number on roll at any one time is sixty-one. The smallest was fifty.

The enrollment this year is forty. This is because of so many members moving away. The following are the officers for 1940-1941:

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| President -----      | Mrs. W. T. Miller  |
| Vice-President ----- | Mrs. W. L. Halston |
| Secretary -----      | Mrs. T. J. Kenealy |
| Treasurer -----      | Mrs. L. B. Jones   |
| Historian -----      | Mrs. J. W. Meyser  |

In 1934, a Business Women's Circle was organized with twenty-six members on roll. They pay a definite part of the budget each year. This year the amount is fifty dollars.

Each year the Auxiliary sends from two to four young people to the Conference at Lewisburg. This year four young people were sent to camp. For five years they sent one delegate to the Va. Medical Training School. For two years two



delegates were sent to this school.

Each year since 1936, the Auxiliary has adopted a child from the orphanage (to the extent of buying his clothes). Last year \$29.28 was spent for outfitting the orphan.

At Thanksgiving time each year a large box of canned fruit is sent to the Lewis-Stuart school. At Christmas time baskets of fruit, toys and clothing are sent to the needier families in the community.

Each year the ladies read a book on Home Missions and one on Foreign Missions. Special classes are held for discussion of these books.

Once during the year there are study classes of at least five hours of intensive study of some Book or Theme of the Bible.

In 1938 a plan was suggested in the church whereby each person read a certain portion of the Bible each day. At the end of the year many had read their Bible through. Now each woman follows the Auxiliary suggestion for daily Bible reading.

The Auxiliary stresses tithing. Last year there were twenty-one tithers reported in our Auxiliary.

For an example of the money expended by the Auxiliary in one year, the following was for the year April 1, 1938 to April 1, 1939:

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Budget -----               | \$196.00 |
| Special Benevolences ----- | 86.00    |
| Special Offerings -----    | 65.78    |
| Social Service -----       | 51.06    |
| Current Expenses -----     | 78.83    |
| Miscellaneous -----        | 29.75    |
| Total                      | 507.11   |

The Auxiliary paid fifty dollars per year for three years to the Ministers' Annuity Fund. In 1935 it paid \$161.52 to paint the house and church.

In the past few years we have lost five members of the Auxiliary by death and many members have moved away, making our enrollment at the present time forty members. Despite this fact, we have not reduced our budget and have been able to go over-the-top each year and have contributed to the causes as usual. This year we also contributed material for draperies to be used in the homes of Missionaries in Africa where our own Alice Hannah is serving as teacher of Missionaries' children.

Information: Church on the western waters - Courtney  
 Mr. J. S. Mathews, Bridgeport, Conn.  
 Mrs. J. W. Keyser

The woman's Auxiliary was organized in July 1923, but did not join the Presbyterial until 1928.